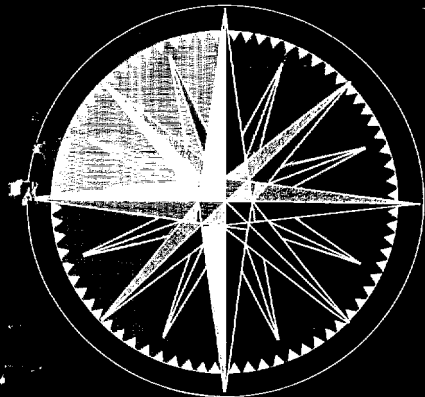


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Approved For Release 2008/02/01 : CIA-RDP79-00927A004800010002-9



12 February 1965

OCI No. 0276/65A

Copy No. **056**

SPECIAL REPORT

SOVIET POLICY AND TACTICS IN THE CYPRUS DISPUTE

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

State Dept. review completed



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SOVIET POLICY AND TACTICS IN THE CYPRUS DISPUTE

The USSR has skillfully exploited the Cyprus crisis to further a number of its policy objectives in the eastern Mediterranean at the expense of the West. It has been able to pursue its major goal of weakening the NATO alliance by playing upon the ambitions and animosities of Greek and Turk without, thus far at least, committing itself to any specific course of action. In recent months Moscow has taken a position more favorable to that of Turkey as the new Soviet leadership has vigorously pursued a policy of rapprochement with Ankara.

Soviet Objectives

Soviet policy in the eastern Mediterranean area has been aimed primarily at reducing the cohesion and effectiveness of the southern flank of NATO. Since the Cyprus crisis began, the USSR has consistently pursued this goal by exploiting tensions among NATO allies and by seeking to complicate efforts to achieve a settlement of the dispute. Thus, Moscow's policy during the prolonged crisis and Soviet gestures toward the Greek Cypriots and the Turks have resulted from strategic considerations which transcended the parochial issues of contention on the island.

Moscow's most immediate goal in Cyprus has been the termination of Western base rights. Soviet propaganda has encouraged Greek Cypriot opposition to the continuation of British sovereign base areas on the island. The USSR has also sought to discredit those political elements in Cyprus favorable to the West and to strengthen the already impressive position of the Communist

Party of Cyprus (AKEL). The influence of AKEL grew considerably during 1964 as the Makarios government consistently sought to give the impression of a closeness of views between the Greek Cypriot and Soviet positions.

The USSR has portrayed itself as the champion of the independence and integrity of the island. The Soviet Union has consistently opposed enosis (union with Greece). Soviet statements in public forums offering the Makarios' government an alternate source of support have encouraged it to maintain its independence of Athens.

Soviet support for the Makarios government, however, was not dictated by any inherent sympathy for the Greek Cypriots, but by the political and strategic considerations already outlined. In recent months, Soviet officials have expressed doubts about the long-term possibilities for Cypriot independence and have shown a full appreciation for Makarios' capacity for duplicity. Even when

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it was attacking Turkey most vigorously, the USSR managed to keep open its lines of contact with Ankara and to preserve its freedom of maneuver for a move toward rapprochement if this were expedient. In fact, it appears that both before and during the crisis Moscow has calculated that its objectives in the area were more likely to be achieved through closer relations with Turkey.

In recent years the USSR has made intermittent efforts to improve relations with Turkey. These moves have been prompted primarily by a desire to reduce and ultimately eliminate the extensive NATO presence on the Soviet borders. As a part of this program, the USSR has slowly expanded its diplomatic, cultural, and economic contacts with Ankara and has tried to promote neutralism in Turkey.

The most recent Soviet efforts, begun in early or mid-1962, were moderately successful, and in June 1963 a Turkish parliamentary delegation visited the USSR. A Soviet delegation was to have returned the visit in January 1964, but the Cyprus crisis led to the postponement of this good-will gesture until January 1965.

Initial Reaction--
Limited Support for Makarios

Moscow's initial reaction to the outbreak of communal fighting on Cyprus in December 1963 was to give full support to Makarios' renunciation of the London and Zurich agreements

of 1960 which established Cypriot independence. Soviet propaganda emphasized the need to respect the national independence and territorial integrity of the Cypriots and alleged that NATO was exploiting communal tensions to justify interference in the internal affairs of the island.

Soviet support for Makarios' efforts to block US-UK plans for a NATO peacekeeping force on the island was motivated in part by a concern that the West would succeed in using the crisis to strengthen its military position in Cyprus--thus jeopardizing Soviet security interests in the eastern Mediterranean. These same strategic calculations led the USSR to encourage Cypriot opposition to British base rights.

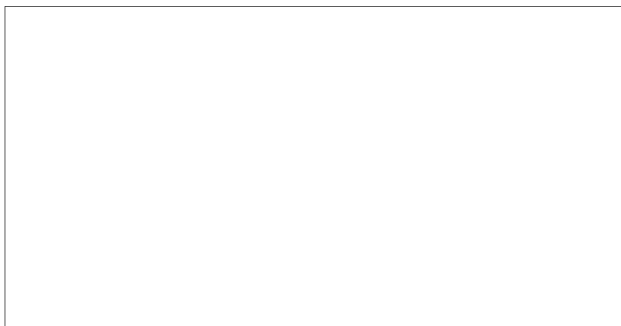
At the same time, this militant vocal support enabled Moscow to undercut Chinese charges that it was indifferent to anti-Western movements among oppressed nationalities. Finally, by encouraging the Greek Cypriots, who were trying to reduce the political role of the Turkish community, Moscow sought to aggravate relations between Ankara and Athens, thus further weakening the southern sector of NATO.

Despite its interest in encouraging Makarios to terminate the London and Zurich agreements, the USSR carefully avoided any commitment to support the Cypriot Government militarily.

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Tentative Gestures
Toward Ankara

A new phase opened up last spring and summer as Moscow apparently calculated that the danger of Turkish intervention had diminished. During this period, Moscow began to spell out its opposition to enosis more clearly and at the same time sought to draw the anti-Turkish sting out of earlier statements. This tactic was reflected in a 4 May Khrushchev statement in Izvestia and a Pravda article the same day. Both commentaries sought to lay the blame for the crisis on "the imperialists and reactionaries that have their own special plans for Cyprus."

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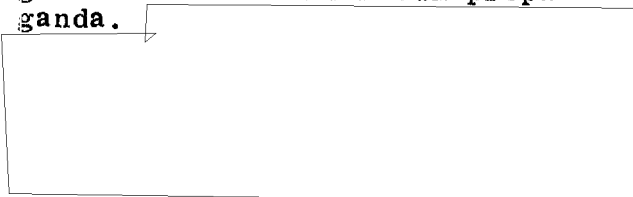
On 2 June, Turkish Foreign Minister Erkin told the press that the USSR had given assurances that it would not supply weapons and war material to Cyprus.

Opposition to
Turkish Intervention

By the end of July, however, tensions in Cyprus had again

raised the danger of Turkish intervention. On 26 July Pravda published a highly inflammatory interview with Archbishop Makarios in which he expressed his "appreciation" for remarks made earlier in the month by Khrushchev concerning Cyprus. Makarios interpreted these remarks as a "serious warning" to Turkey against invasion; Khrushchev's statement fell far short of this, but Pravda allowed Makarios to give it a bellicose ring.

At the same time, however, Moscow may have become concerned 25X1 that the Greek Cypriots had begun to believe their own propaganda.



Subsequent Soviet conduct during and after the 9 August Turkish air strikes on Cyprus bore out this warning. Cyprus asked the Soviet Union "to intervene" on its behalf, according to the Cypriot foreign minister. Khrushchev responded immediately with noncommittal notes to Turkish Prime Minister Inonu and to Makarios. Only on 15 August, after the danger of further Turkish attack had subsided, did a Soviet Government statement promise "help" in the event of foreign invasion.

Moscow apparently issued some private warnings to Turkey, but it is unclear how specific these were. Erkin told the US ambassador that on 15 August Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko stated that in case of further Turkish military activity in

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Cyprus, the USSR "will help Cyprus militarily." Erkin told the British ambassador that Gromyko said the USSR would "intervene militarily." Following up these conversations, Erkin approached the US ambassador on more than one occasion for US assurances of support in the event of Soviet retaliation against further Turkish military action in Cyprus. Erkin may have elaborated on Gromyko's warning simply to obtain assurances from the US before Turkey undertook any further action in Cyprus.

The Soviet Government statement of 15 August offered to open negotiations with Cyprus concerning the "help" to be rendered in case of an invasion. As a result of this offer, a Greek Cypriot delegation traveled to Moscow and on 30 September signed an agreement with the USSR. The full details of this agreement have not yet been reported, but there is speculation that it covered a wide range of military material.

Deliveries under the pact began in January 1965 and are likely to be finished by mid-February.

Recent Moves Toward Turkey

By the time of the Cypriot visit to Moscow it was already becoming clear that the USSR was determined to resume its efforts to improve relations with Ankara, and it is unlikely that the Greek Cypriots received many specific promises from the Soviet authorities. Moscow may have calculated that Turkey had abandoned further plans for an attack on Cyprus and that Archbishop Makarios was moving toward accepting enosis. Under these circumstances, it was not only possible but necessary to seek an improvement of relations with Turkey and to base this effort in part on a common opposition to enosis.

Moscow's efforts have been facilitated by Ankara's conviction that the West had not given it adequate support over Cyprus. In the latter half of 1964, this disillusionment led to a feeling in Turkey that it was necessary to improve relations with the USSR. The first step in this effort was Erkin's 30 October - 6 November visit to Moscow.

This visit, first proposed by the USSR in mid-1963, was used by both governments to demonstrate a renewed warmth in relations. This took the form of a Soviet recognition of the "lawful rights" of the Turkish community on the island--a tactical gain from the Turkish point of view--and an agreement on cultural and scientific exchanges. Subsequently, a Turkish

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technical delegation visited the USSR in December for two weeks and concluded an agreement to expand trade.

The USSR quickly responded to the Erkin visit by sending to Turkey the long-delayed parliamentary delegation, led by presidium member Podgorny, from 4 to 13 January 1965. During the visit Podgorny made routine reference to such issues as Turkish adherence to NATO and sought support for the Soviet position on UN Article 19, but directed most of his efforts toward improving the atmosphere of relations. He offered economic aid to Turkey and invited both President Gursel and Prime Minister Inonu to visit the USSR.

Despite a Turkish show of optimism that the USSR is moving to endorse Ankara's position on Cyprus, Podgorny specifically refused to recognize the validity of the London and Zurich agreements--which give Turkey the right to intervene militarily. Moreover, on 13 January TASS announced a visit to Moscow of an AKEL delegation to discuss the Cyprus situation. This announcement reiterated the standard Soviet line that the independence and integrity of Cyprus must be respected, that foreign interference must be avoided, and that the Cypriots must be free to decide their own affairs.

Podgorny promised a statement endorsing the principle of federation as a possible means of settling the dispute on the island. This promise was partially fulfilled by an equivocal statement

in Izvestia by Gromyko on 21 January. Gromyko suggested that federation might be chosen by the Cypriot people, but immediately qualified this statement by indicating that such a "system presupposes the existence of a single centralized government."

Although Gromyko's reference to federation excited the most comment among the principals to the dispute, it was almost certainly intended to be read as part of a larger scheme which would contain elements pleasing to both the Greek Cypriots and to Ankara. Moscow probably was aware of the opposition in Athens and Nicosia to federation, but it appears to have miscalculated the intensity of the emotional impact of the term "federal solution." This suggests that Soviet efforts to pursue a consistent policy, while giving the appearance of being all things to all men, may have finally broken down. Moscow's recent stand, for instance, has already begun to erode the once-strong position of AKEL on the island and appears to have severely reduced its chances of coming to power by electoral means.

Behind the balancing act attempted by Gromyko, however, was a clear statement of basic Soviet interests in the affair: opposition to enosis and to the presence of foreign troops on the island. Gromyko declared that "the main thing now is to ensure Cyprus' independence and territorial integrity" and that "the withdrawal of all foreign troops" is necessary.

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Outlook: Limitations on
Soviet Action

Soviet goals have not shifted since the downfall of Khrushchev, but the new leaders appear to be moving with greater vigor to improve relations with Ankara. Erkin's visit was the first by a high-level foreign non-Communist official after the fall of Khrushchev. The dispatch of a figure with the stature of Podgorny and the propaganda treatment of his visit reflect considerable Soviet interest in impressing Turkey with the potential gains offered by closer relations.

Despite Moscow's quick recognition and exploitation of Turkish disillusionment with the West, Soviet policy is to a degree limited by past Soviet initiatives. The logic of the situation following the Turkish air strikes in August demanded at least the offer to "help" the Cypriots. This help is probably not of such a magnitude as to have a serious effect on the military situation on the island, but its psychological impact could damage the Soviet position in Turkey. Moscow, moreover, would face a genuine dilemma if Turkey should take a threatening stand against Makarios' recent steps to promulgate an electoral law which disregards the terms of the London and Zurich agreements.

Finally, Soviet leaders are probably aware of the fragile nature of the recent improvement in relations with Turkey. The rapprochement of the past few months has been undertaken over the opposition of the Justice Party, which now appears likely to win the forthcoming elections in Turkey. Despite growing trends of independence and opportunism in Ankara's foreign policy, there remains a strong current of anti-Russian feeling in Turkey and it is unlikely that there will be any significant change in attitudes in the next few years.

Despite these limitations on its freedom of action, the USSR will continue to seek to expand its role in the eastern Mediterranean at the expense of the West. It is unlikely to assist in seeking a solution of the Cyprus problem, since it has most to gain by a continuation of tensions between Greek and Turk. The USSR might actively oppose any solution which partitioned the island, as was proposed by Turkey last summer. Moscow is likely, however, to pursue its rapprochement with Ankara as far as possible, without compromising its position elsewhere in the Afro-Asian world in the event of renewed Turkish threats of intervention.

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